

Notice of Allowability

Application No.

10/533,286

Examiner

Theresa Trieu

Applicant(s)

OKAICHI ET AL.

Art Unit

3748

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to the applicants' amendment filed on Sept. 14, 2007.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1,2,4-13,15-23,26,29-32.
3. ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).


* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.
THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

4. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
5. ☒ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) ☒ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) ☒ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
6. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO/SB/08),
Paper No./Mail Date _____
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit
of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6. ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413),
Paper No./Mail Date _____
7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other _____


Theresa Trieu
Primary Examiner
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EXAMINER'S COMMENT

This Office Action is responsive to the applicants' amendment filed on Sept. 14, 2007.

Claims 3, 14, 24, 25, 27, 28 have been canceled. Claims 29-32 have been added. Accordingly, claims 1, 2, 4-13, 15-23, 26 and 29-32 are pending in this application.

Applicant's' cooperation in correcting the informalities in the drawing and specification are appreciated. However, a few minor contain in drawing.

Drawings

1. The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(5) because they include the following reference character(s) not mentioned in the description: "59". Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d), or amendment to the specification to add the reference character(s) in the description in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(b) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Allowable Subject Matter

2. Claims 1, 2, 4-13, 15-23, 26 and 29-32 are allowed.
3. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

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- Regarding claims 1 and 2: Applicants' amendments to the claims and arguments (presented in the Remarks section filed on March 21, 2007, pages 13-16) have overcome the cited prior art.

- Regarding claims 23 and 26: As pointed out by applicant on pages 14-15 in applicants' arguments (filed on Sept. 14, 2007), the cited references fail to disclose or render obvious the claimed combination including a diameter of a hole closer to a central portion of the porous plate being smaller than that of a hole closer to an outer periphery of the porous plate.

- Regarding claims 29 and 30: the prior art fails to disclose or render obvious the claimed combination including: porous member being made of mesh through which the working fluid passes, and a central portion of the porous member is thicker than an outer periphery of the porous member and wherein a central portion of the mesh is higher density than that of an outer periphery of the mesh.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Prior Art

4. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure and consists of patent: Hashimoto (Publication Number JP 03-015692) discloses a separator plate having a hole.

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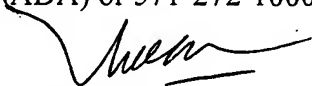
COMMUNICATION

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Theresa Trieu whose telephone number is 571-272-4868. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 8:30am- 5:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Thomas E. Denion can be reached on 571-272-4859. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

TT
September 29, 2007



Theresa Trieu
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3748